The Builder.

No. CLXXX.

SATURDAY, JULY 18, 1846.

IT seems now tolerably certain, that the new Buildings Act will not come into the House this session—if, indeed, the alteration of the ministry should not induce an entirely different arrangement. Several modifications have been recently recommended by the referees to the Commissioners of Works and Buildings; one relative to the "insulation of buildings," and another as to chimney shafts for manufactories. The latter is to the effect, that such structures, if not exceeding sixty feet in height, may be built without special application to the official referees.

It is satisfactory to find that, with some few exceptions, the district surveyors perform their very onerous duties in such a manner as to avoid exciting unpleasant feelings and so increasing the unpopularity of the measure. One member of the body, to whom we have had occasion to refer, with much regret, on several occasions, still amuses himself and annoys others, by taking unsound cases to the referees, for which he has very properly to pay the costs; and another has placed himself, by want of judgment, in a very critical position. Exceptions of this sort, however, were to be expected, and do not prevent us from saying, that the district surveyors as a body, are an intelligent, able set of men, and have shewn themselves deserving of confidence.

Some of the surveyors, in the newly formed districts, have had anxious duties to perform in respect of ruinous buildings, and have necessarily excited for a time, the ill-will of those who, having derived revenue for years from decaying structures without outlay, felt aggrieved when called on to support or rebuild them. The number of restorations which have been enforced, would scarcely be believed if stated, and in several cases, we are informed, the premises have actually *fallen* during the process required by the Act. The advantage to the public in this respect is undeniable.

The clause for vacating cellars and underground rooms not deemed fit for habitation, came into operation on the 1st instant, and has been very rigidly adhered to in many of the districts. It is asserted that in St. Giles's alone, upwards of 5,000 persons were unhoused; we are disposed however, to think the number must be exaggerated. The difficulty of finding accommodation for them was great, and shews the necessity of providing fitting habitations for the working classes, so many of whom are turned out by every improvement made. If the model houses proposed to be built in St. Giles's were ready, there would be no lack of tenants.

Relative to cellars, it may be well to remind our readers, "That from and after the 1st of July, 1846, it will not be lawful to let separately for hire as a dwelling, nor to occupy or suffer to be occupied as such, any underground room or cellar,—that is, any room or cellar of which the surface of the floor is more than 3 feet below the surface of the footway of the nearest street or alley,—

Unless there be an area adjoining one side of such room or cellar, and extending the full length of that side, and at the least 3 feet wide in every part, and 6 inches lower than the floor of such room or cellar;—

And unless such area, to the extent of at the least 5 feet in length by 2 feet 6 inches in width, in front of the window of such room or cellar, be open or covered only with open iron gratings;—

And unless there be in such room or cellar an open fire-place with a proper flue therefrom;—

And unless there be to such room or cellar a window opening, of at least 9 superficial feet in area, fitted with a frame filled in with glazed sashes, of which at the least 4½ superficial feet is made to open for ventilation;—

And unless such room or cellar be 7 feet at the least in height from the floor to the ceiling."

The penalty for allowing an under-ground apartment not in accordance with these provisions of the Act, to be used as a separate dwelling, is a sum not exceeding twenty shillings for every day during which it shall have been occupied; one-half to go to the informer, the other half to the poor of the parish in which the apartment is situated.*

The value of the clause which provides that the stairs and landings of public buildings, and the floors of their halls, vestibules, and passages shall be fire-proof, is brought forcibly to the mind by the account of the recent dreadful loss of life through the burning of the Theatre Royal in Quebec. It is not quite clear (in the accounts) whether or not the staircase, to which all rushed in the awful confusion of the moment, gave way, though this seems to be the impression of one who was an eye-witness of the occurrence: but one feels, when reflecting on such an event, the immense importance of safe means of egress from buildings where large numbers of persons congregate, and the even greater importance of having it well understood publicly that there *are* such means, as this knowledge, giving confidence, would lessen the ill-considered rush to escape, through which, under such circumstances, life is usually sacrificed.

The constant recurrence of destructive fire will one day lead to an entire alteration in our manner of building.

The following is the new "Table of fees to be paid to the Registrar of Metropolitan Buildings in respect of the services to be performed by the official referees, and by the said registrar, in order to defray the expenses of the office incident to such services, and the salaries of clerks, &c." On comparing it with the original table, previously given in our pages,* it will be seen that a great reduction has been made.

No.	MATTER OF BUSINESS.	Fee. £. s. d.
1.	For every application for the approval or sanction of the Official Referees	0 5 0
2.	For every application for the modification of the Act	0 5 0
3.	For every information or application in cases of irregularity	0 5 0
4.	For every requisition	0 5 0
5.	For every appeal	0 5 0
6.	For every first notice (§ 21, 24)	0 5 0
7.	For every application for consent (§ 117	0 5 0
8.	For every certificate of the District Surveyor (§ 24, 48	0 5 0
9.	For every application for appointment of a deputy, substitute, or assistant surveyor, or of one surveyor to act for another	0 5 0
10.	For every hearing by the Official Referees,—From 5s. to	1 0 0
11.	For every survey by the Official Referees, or any of them, or by any other person under their direction From 5s. to	1 0 0
12.	For every certificate From 5s. to	1 5 0
13.	For every award From 5s. to	10 0 0
14.	For every order or determination From 5s. to	1 0 0
15.	For every license to use a building subject to special supervision From 5s. to	1 0 0
16.	For every report to the Commissioners of Works and Buildings, for a modification of the Act From 5s. to	1 0 0
17.	For examining accounts referred to the Official Referees,—One per cent. on the amount.	
18.	For measuring work,—5½ per cent. up to 100l., and 1½ per cent. on all above 100l.	
19.	For making, verifying, copying by hand, or tracing any drawing,—1s. for every half hour occupied.	
20.	For printing copies of any drawing,—1s. for every page of foolscap or expand, by the size.	
21.	For every certified copy of, or extract from, any document,—6d. for every folio of 72 words.	
22.	For copying any document to be registered or filed 6d. for every folio of 72 words.	
23.	For copying any other document,—9d. for every folio of 72 words.	
24.	For attending parties searching documents,—6d. for each volume searched.	
25.	For the travelling expenses incurred in any survey made by direction of the Official Referees and Registrar,—The expenses incurred.	
26.	For petty disbursements for messages and postages, &c.,—The expenses incurred.	
	FEES FOR THE TRAVELLING EXPENSES OF THE OFFICIAL REFEREES AND REGISTRAR.	
27.	For the travelling expenses of each of the Official Referees and Registrar,—The expenses incurred.	
	FEES FOR SPECIAL SUPERVISION	
	[To include travelling expenses, but not copying expenses and petty disbursements.]	
28.	For the special supervision of buildings subject thereto—If of the extra first-rate	2 12 6
	If of the first-rate	2 2 0
	If of the second-rate	1 11 6
	If of the third-rate	1 1 0
	If of the fourth-rate	0 10 6
29.	For the special supervision of alterations and additions to such buildings,—Such fee not exceeding the above in amount for each rate respectively, as shall be appointed by the official referees.	
	FEES FOR EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES FOR CERTIFICATES OF QUALIFICATION FOR THE OFFICE OF DISTRICT SURVEYOR.	
30.	For every preliminary statement lodged by candidates for certificates of qualification for the office of district surveyor	2 2 0
31.	For every certificate of qualification	3 3 0

GENERAL RULE AS TO FEES.

The official referees and registrar are to have the power, when more than one case has been surveyed at the same survey, or heard at the same sitting away from the office, of dividing the fees for travelling expenses and incidental disbursements between such cases as they think fit.

THE YOUNG ARCHITECTS OF ENGLAND.

BY ONE OF THEMSELVES.

II.

SIR,—The kind manner in which you were pleased to acknowledge my last caused THE BUILDER to rise at once to a prodigious premium in the market of my estimation. Your liberality, your "magnanimity," such want of *partizanship*, is *good*.

But, Sir, you do not suppose that I meant to attack your leader? If so—"Mr. Editor, thou art beside thyself; much learning," &c. Sorry should I be also if any one of the multitude of men, women, and children who sit at your feet as a sort of Gamaliel, should for a moment conceive that either you or I could be guilty of such error. My object was very different indeed, Sir; merely *to follow you up*, to carry out more particularly a certain idea, to support with a charge of philosophical cavalry the previous havoc of your common-sense artillery. When I might seem to differ from your expressed opinion, I was but directing you to another aspect of the scene, far from denying the truth of the view which you had previously taken. I hope we *both* are right.

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* On Tuesday, Lord Duncan put a question to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in connection with this clause and the window-tax. His Lordship said a circular had been issued by the official referees, calling the attention of the inhabitants in the metropolitan districts to a provision in that Act, which said that no person should be suffered, after the passing of the Act, to let as a dwelling any underground room or cellar, unless there were to such room or cellar, a window-opening of at least nine superficial feet in area, fitted with a frame filled in with glazed sashes, for ventilation. He held a petition in his hand from a person who represented that, by making such additional window, he should be charged with eighteen windows instead of one. He wished to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he was willing to make some provision whereby windows opened under the Metropolitan Buildings Act should be exempted from the window-tax?

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, the question which the noble lord had put was not exactly that of which he had given him notice, which was whether such windows under the Act would be liable to duty: he had not, therefore, given any consideration to this question. There could be no doubt that such windows were liable to duty.

* See Vol. III., p. 87.

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